

## **CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

### **Overview**

The motto of our town is “Small Town, Big Heart,” and this name is a true representation of our community. The Wachusett Reservoir, constructed 100 years ago, had a significant and lasting impact on the community, and has been the subject of many photographs, paintings, drawings and other art forms. The town, though small, offers many opportunities for cultural activities and has several historically important and interesting sites. Its proximity to the City of Worcester is also an advantage, since Worcester also offers plentiful and varied cultural resources.

The West Boylston Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and honoring the town's history through programs, exhibitions, collections and publications. The Society was founded in 1972 to keep alive and increase interest in the early history of the town of West Boylston and its people, to preserve in enduring form its items of general value in local history, as well as traditions and curiosities, and to encourage general public interest in the work.

### **Key Findings:**

West Boylston has numerous cultural resources:

The Beaman Memorial Public Library provides a variety of programs for people of all ages, including author visits, literacy programs, craft classes, book discussion groups and a very popular summer reading incentive program.

The Cultural Council helps underwrite and/or sponsor various programs using State grant funds. Veterans organizations consist of the American Legion Post 204 and Ladies Auxiliary, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 690 and Ladies Auxiliary. They organize the Memorial Day Parade, decorate the graves of all veterans in Town cemeteries, meet regularly and assist veterans.

The Bandstand Committee organizes a full schedule of summer concerts sponsored by local businesses. The performances take place on Sunday evenings.

The West Boylston Public Access Cable TV offers programming on 3 channels: Channel 191 is the public channel; Channel 192 is the educational channel; and Channel 194 is the government channel.

The West Boylston Council on Aging provides a variety of services to the elder population, including but not limited to transportation, lunch programs, exercise classes, Meals on Wheels, Diabetic Support Group, and Education and Wellness Programs. A new Senior Center is currently being built on the site of the former Mixter Building on Prescott Street.

There are many religious institutions in West Boylston, each with regular services and various programs for children and adults. Places of worship in the town are Our Lady of Good Counsel, First Congregational Church, First Assembly of God Church, Hosanna Chapel, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Oakdale Methodist Church, Christ Lutheran Church, and Freedom Worship Center.

West Boylston also has a multitude of clubs and service organizations including:

- Beaman Oak Garden Club
- Friends of Beaman Library
- W. Boylston Arts Foundation
- Friends of the Council on Aging
- WestBest
- Odd Fellows
- Masonic Lodge
- Lions Club
- Wachusett Area Rotary Club
- Elder Services
- Cub Scouts
- Boy Scout Troop 151
- Campfire Girls
- Girl Scouts
- Numerous sports leagues

In the past, much of the Historical Society's focus has been on the preservation of historical buildings. Such projects included the renovation of the Bigelow Tavern and relocation of the

Jacob Winn Barn to 65 Worcester St. These buildings now serve as the headquarters and museum. In addition the space contains a library, a reading room, work rooms and display space and storage of historic documents and West Boylston memorabilia. One of the Society's original goals was to work with the town's Historical Commission in the successful preservation of the Old Stone Church. They successfully persuaded the state to rebuild the Old Stone Church after the side walls and roof collapsed in the 1970s. It now appears in the Society's seal. The West Boylston Historical Commission oversees and makes happen, the ongoing program of Preservation and Conservation of the Mount Vernon Cemetery.

The society is now focusing on preservation of the Historical Society itself and directing efforts to improving visibility, increasing membership and growing and sharing the knowledge and history they have amassed.

### Key Challenges

As with many all volunteer organizations an influx of new members and volunteers is needed.

The following actions will help us meet our strategic goals.

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
1	Engaging the interest of new leaders in the town	To build interest and increase volunteers to continue and revive cultural activities	-Continue existing activities -Revive activities such as West Boylston Day, Scarecrow contest etc. -Launch new events of interest to residents.		
2	Increase visibility of the Historical Society	-To build interest in the Historical Society -To share information -To increase membership	-Add more open hours to the museum -Increase social media presence -Add events -Participate in Town Events -Partner with other groups		
3	Improve communication of cultural programs	-Share information and build interest	Find ways to communicate the		

			opportunities as well as the needs of the programs to the public.		
4	Increase volunteer pool for Historical Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To support and assist the Board of Directors</li> <li>-to provide more services/programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Focused volunteer and membership drives</li> <li>-Identify skills needed and recruit</li> <li>-Train new researchers and docents</li> </ul>		
5	Ensure funding of the local cultural activities				
6	Increase fundraising efforts for the Historical Society beyond membership and annual yard sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To perpetuate the Society</li> <li>-To continue funding the maintenance of the buildings and grounds</li> <li>-To provide more programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase membership</li> <li>-Town wide mailing</li> <li>-More access to Society Store items for sale</li> </ul>		
7	Increase Historical Society acquisition of historical artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To perpetuate the Society</li> <li>-To have changing displays on a regular basis</li> <li>-to attract visitors and returning visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use social media to encourage people to donate artifacts</li> </ul>		